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ABSTRACT

A curriculum in affective education was developed for learning disabled and emotionally impaired high school students. The initial course in the curriculum was one on personal growth (in which students were encouraged to become more aware of identity, competencies, preferences, influences, and body). Objectives were written for three major subject areas within this topic: identity, interpersonal relationships, and values. Lesson plans were developed to include music as an approach to helping students understand and express their feelings. Evaluations of the course revealed increases in self-concept and in communication skills. The course eventually was expanded into a 2-part course for secondary behavior disordered students. (CL)

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A Personal Adjustment Curriculum for Secondary Behaviorally Disordered Students

Cora J. Houchens

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William Morse (1982) asks the question, "Has there been a time in recent memory when affective education was more needed in the schools?" Our society is a high-risk society for growing up and growing up handicapped adds to the risk of not achieving emotional integration and social skills. The practices of special education have not always recognized the emotional side of the student. Schools want the student to be able to compete in the social and academic mainstream whenever he or she possibly can, even though they (the schools) have concentrated mainly on the academic areas alone.

The general lack of affective programming in our schools should not be taken as an indication that affective goals are unimportant. Schools have emphasized the development of cognitive skills with many curriculums, but there is a "hidden curriculum" which plays an important role in the lives of students (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978).

This hidden curriculum attempts to teach students those social skills and behaviors, values, and attitudes which are thought to be important in school and society. Up until now there has been little direct instruction in the area of personal adjustment or the affective education area. We assume students learn such skills on their own but the review of literature tells us that a significant number of learning disabled students and emotionally impaired students do not (Bryan, 1977; Gordon, 1970; Griffin, 1971; Silver, 1974).

Wallace and McLaughlin (1979) stress the importance of both academic and nonacademic skills in the education of learning disabled students, suggesting that the development of social skills should be emphasized. Berlin (1975) also states that even though the schools are known for their academic climate, there is also an emotional climate which supports learning. Wood (1982) emphasizes that the primary concern of every teacher of special education should be cognitive development, physical development, and socioemotional development.

As with special education, affective education was once considered the responsibility of "experts," not the classroom teacher. Students with social and personal adjustment problems were referred to these experts: the school social worker, the psychologist, or the guidance counselor. Specialists' skills were then applied, usually on a one-to-one basis.

In teaching affective education and personal adjustment, teachers are not being asked to do more than they have always done, but what is being proposed is a conversion of the affective effort that is already taking place.

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Teachers already spend time motivating the uninvolved, resolving peer conflicts, and encouraging reluctant students to join the group, so why not get on with planned teaching in the affective areas as well? Jersild (1952) said it long ago: "The function of the school is to enhance the student's self-concept. Affective education requires consciously directing the teacher's affective intervention and not leaving the matter to haphazard efforts."

Wood describes the two generic labels of affective programming as "Affective Education" and "Social Skills Training" (McDowell, Adamson & Wood, 1982).

Affective educators place greater stress on thoughts, feelings, and interpersonal relationships when describing their programs. They try to provide experiences in which cognitive and emotional development are interrelated in ways that lead to enhancement of student self-concept and to the development of social skills.

Social skills training is the planning of experiences that will teach students "behavior that can be used when appropriate to secure positive interpersonal consequences and avoid aversive consequences" (Polsgrove & Nelson, 1982).

Morse, Ardizzone, Macdonald, and Pasick (1980) present a model of affective education with the goals depicted on three dimensions: personal, social, and attitudinal. They state "the purpose of affective education is to foster in each individual an adequate self-concept combined with self-esteem. This is their personal dimension. The social dimension is the interpersonal relationships developed toward others, handling one's impulses, and learning to experience social situations. The last dimension, the attitudinal dimension, involves life experiences, attitudes, and appreciation of these experiences. These three dimensions make up a person's life.

The goal of the author in the following pages is to present a curriculum that would be labeled "affective education" by Wood and include the basic characteristics, of life — personal, social, and attitudinal dimensions of life. Teachers need an affective curriculum which provides them with the tools to teach these skills in a systematic manner. Such a curriculum in affective education has been taught directly to learning disabled and emotionally impaired students at East Detroit High School for the last 8 years. The following is the story of how this curriculum was developed, the affective principles on which it is founded, a glimpse at the curriculum model itself, and the evaluation of such a program.

METHOD AND DESIGN

In September 1974 the director of special education for the East Detroit Public Schools hired five special education teachers for the district's high school to initiate a program for the emotionally impaired and learning disabled students using the Team-Model approach. This cross categorical secondary program utilized all five teachers' talents and abilities while each worked within his/her own specialized role. The author of this paper was the teacher consultant for the affective and personal adjustment area for the emotionally impaired and learning disabled in this model program.

At first, the author began seeing students individually, taking them out of their classes and talking to them on a one-to-one basis. This approach was found to be unsuccessful. Students did not want to leave the regular classroom to meet with the teacher consultant for fear of appearing to be "special," they also did not want to come before school hours or stay after dismissal time due to jobs or other commitments. It became a difficult task to see

individual students for long periods of time more than twice a week. When meeting with the students, the author felt as though she was listening, making decisions, but not helping the students learn about themselves (identity), their friends or parents (interpersonal relationships), or their attitudes and beliefs (values). The meetings with each student became mini-counseling sessions and the students repeated the same problems and areas of concern affecting their skills and behaviors.

Feeling that group dynamics might be a more successful tool, the author wanted to schedule students together to talk about the same problems and areas of concern. In the classroom, many potent social rewards are controlled by the peer group. Changing of peer reward patterns or supplementing them with adult-controlled reinforcement has been shown to be an effective means of encouraging communication in many areas (Lebsack & Salzberg, 1981).

The birth of a new course, Personal Growth, came about in February 1975. Approval was obtained from the director of special education, the school principal, and the board of education. The course was to be one-half unit of credit, like all the other courses in the high school, and was specifically for certified emotionally impaired and learning disabled students. It was one of their five daily classes. For heavily mainstreamed students, it was the only special education class. For other students, it was one of a mixture of special education and regular classes. The Personal Growth course was included in each student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

Each class section had 10 students enrolled. Three class sessions were held daily, thus giving direct service or instruction to a total of 30 students on a regular basis 5 days a week. The result of this was that teacher frustration and stress disappeared because not only had a real learning situation been established in the classroom, but there was still time to see students on an individual basis, make teacher contacts, participate in IEPs, and perform other role responsibilities.

A course description was written for the high school's information package that students and parents receive. It read:

Personal Growth — This course focuses on three areas: identity, interpersonal relationships, and values. The initial phase is awareness in each of these areas to help the student become more aware of his/her identity, of his/her patterns, preferences, influences, competencies, and body. Another objective is to help the student become more aware of what he/she does in his/her interpersonal relationships, how he/she affects others, and what he/she needs from others. Helping the student become more aware of his/her values and the degree to which his/her actions reflect his/her values is also incorporated in this course.

Three major areas were covered in Personal Growth as listed in the course description; identity, interpersonal relationships, and values.

Personal Growth starts with the self, stressing how a student sees himself/herself and his/her situation. While situations may change, a student's beliefs about himself/herself are always determining factors in his/her school behavior. Most educators concerned with special students of high school age agree that a poor self-concept is evidenced in many high school-age handicapped students (Bryan, 1977; Kronick, 1981; Morse, 1982). This generates feelings of insecurity in the students and affects how he/she relates to people. A student with a poor view of himself/herself may have difficulty in conversing with others, admitting that he/she is wrong, expressing his/her feelings, accepting

constructive criticism from others, or evaluating ideas that differ from those of other people. An insecure student is often afraid that others may not like him/her if he/she disagrees with them. The same student, because he/she feels unworthy, inadequate, and inferior, lacks confidence and thinks that his/her ideas are uninteresting to others and not worth communicating. He/she may become seclusive and guarded in his/her communication, therefore negating his/her own ideas.

In order for an adolescent student to grow emotionally, he/she must be aware of the people around him/her and of their influences on his/her behavior and attitudes. Different behaviors are involved in establishing interpersonal relationships. Schutz (1960) identifies three key types of behavior involved in interpersonal relationships: inclusion, control, and affection. First, the student exhibits behaviors to satisfy his/her need for association with people, for companionship, belonging, and togetherness. Next, the student needs to recognize that he/she may have to exert authority or influence over other people. Finally behaviors are directed toward satisfying the need for close, personal feelings between two people. Most "normal" students successfully learn the behavioral responses which govern social interaction without the benefit of any planned and organized instruction (Schaeffer & Francescani, 1981). Most behaviorally disordered students do not. They need direct and systematic instruction in these skills. Many behaviorally disordered students are given labels due to the types of behavior they exhibit in their interpersonal relationships. When a student is not included in a relationship, in school or outside the school, he/she is described as being isolated. If his/her behavior is such that he/she cannot exert authority or influence, he/she becomes a "follower." If he/she reacts negatively, he/she is said to be rebellious or unruly.

Other interpersonal skills that often need reinforcing are: the ability to identify and build on personal strengths; giving and receiving precise, positive feedback; active listening; the ability to emphasize others' positive points; the ability to use group planning in an effort to solve problems rather than a competition for power or control; and the ability to both give and accept direction in working toward a common goal.

Every day, students meet situations which call for thought, opinion, decision-making, and action. Each one of their daily decisions and actions are based on consciously and unconsciously held beliefs, attitudes, and values. The student often ponders over what and how to think, believe, and behave. Simon (1972) states repeatedly that today value conflicts are more acute than ever before. Often a behaviorally disordered student does not accept the values held by his parents, peers, and school authorities. This can lead to an emptiness of commitment or a feeling that life has no purpose. This feeling can in turn lead to frustration and acting-out behavior by the student. These behaviors may be directed toward parents, peers, and school authorities who helped produce the feeling of emptiness. As a result, the student may escape in temporary desperate excitements. He/she may jump from one job to another, unable to find any kind of work that is satisfying. He/she may spend his/her time daydreaming, unmoved by any effort of his/her teachers and parents. He/she has not clarified for himself/herself what he/she values and consequently cannot have a clear, consistent purpose or know what he/she believes. He/she does not know where he/she is going or why. He/she simply is not clear as to what his/her life is about and therefore is unable or unwilling to utilize his/her full intellectual potential in everyday living.

From the three major areas of identity, interpersonal relationships, and values, 42 course objectives were written. A hierarchy of ideas and topics

developed were utilized with detailed outlines of daily lesson plans. Each lesson plan included:

- Topic
- Area of Personal Growth
- Method of Presentation
- Goal and Instructional Objective
- Strategy and Materials
- Music To Be Used With Topic

Music was stressed in each topic as adolescents can understand their feelings through musical expression. Music provides an imagination and emotional expression; when the feeling of anger was discussed, the song "Angry Young Man" by the group Styx was used for concluding the topic.

The importance of following a hierarchy of units was very important in that students are working on skills and behaviors and need structured lessons to meet these goals and objectives. Following are the units covered for Personal Growth I.

Awareness	Going Through Changes
Similarities and Differences	Communication
Strengths and Abilities	Awareness, Listening
Feelings, Thought, Behavior	Ways to Communicate
Love	Values
Happiness	Rank Ordering
Anger	Voting
Hurt	Continuum
Jealousy	Risk-Taking
Loneliness	Decision-Making
Perception and Sensitivity	Moving
Body Image	Joining a Crowd
Dreaming	Saying NO
Trust	Personalities
The Helping Relationship	Roles and Goals
Friendship	Game Playing
Identity	Winning and Losing
Activities	(Houchens, 1982)
Time	
Values	
Events	
Ideas of the Future	

The students and the teacher sat in a circle for most of the daily lessons. Sometimes other room variations were used. The students usually sat in the same seats daily although there were no assigned seats. Verbal discussion was the prime source of interaction and mode of delivery with little writing. Writing was only used to clarify verbal conversation or answer questions.

Since Personal Growth was a class requiring group participation and involved listening and communication skills, classroom participation was one of the most important elements in establishing the group dynamics necessary to achieve the desired objectives for each class. The various methods listed below were used to provide a variety of presentations and involve visual, auditory, and multisensory channels of learning:

Buzz Sessions	Discussion	Open-ended Stories
Brainstorming	Rank Ordering	Role-Playing
Community Action Problem	Dramatization	Group Interpretation
Solving	Lecture	(Houchens, 1982)
Debate		

EVALUATION

All the students were pretested and posttested on two measurement instruments, the Interpersonal Communication Inventory (1970) and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (1964).

The Interpersonal Communication Inventory was used as a measuring device for teaching purposes in that all items were organized into clusters of communication and became the instructional objectives for the course. These clusters from the 40-item inventory included the individual's ability to listen, to self-disclose, to handle angry feelings, to express himself/herself, and his/her self-esteem was explored. The self-inventory asks the students to respond by checking one of three possible responses: *yes*, *sometimes*, and *no* which are then scored from zero to three. The higher score is given the favorable response indicative of good interpersonal communication.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale measured total self-concept on a broader scale with regard to behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance, and satisfaction in students. This pretest and posttest instrument was used for meeting the Personal Growth course objectives. This instrument has a total of 80 questions requiring the student to answer *yes* and *no* and is written at the third-grade reading level. The scale is broken up into six interpretable factors of self-concept: behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction. Sums of these, or a percentage of the items answered in the given direction for each factor, can be calculated to obtain a cluster score. These cluster scores and their factor items are all scored in the positive direction: the higher the score the more positive is the attribute.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

During the last 6 years the significant results obtained from the Interpersonal Communication Inventory have showed increases in all eight cluster scores, a marked increase in total raw scores as well as a mean increase for all Personal Growth classes. This communication inventory shows that communication is the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts, and beliefs about yourself. It is through language, the primary means of communication, that individuals influence, exchange meanings, and understand one another as well as the self, thus self-concept (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
*Correlation Between Pretest and Posttest on Interpersonal
Communication Inventory for Nine Students or One
Personal Growth I Class
(Total Scores)*

Pretest	Posttest	Change In Raw Score
Mean=63.22	Mean=73.66	Mean Increase=10.44
SD=10.29	SD=10.67	+96

Individual scores on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale were higher on the posttest. This instrument has only been given for the last year. All students showed significant gains that could be listed as growth. What was also important was that the group mean increase indicated a more positive self-concept for the Personal Growth class as a group. When each individual's

raw score together with percentile ranking was compared with members of the normative group, all students on the pretest scored below average. On the posttest all students had average raw scores, and higher percentiles. All stanine scores were also in the average range and the mean of the posttest was equivalent to the mean of the normative sample (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
*Correlation Between Pretest and Posttest on the Piers-Harris
Children's Self-Concept Scale for Nine Students or One
Personal Growth I Class
(Total Scores)*

Pretest	Posttest	Change in Raw Score
Mean=48.77	Mean=56.33	Mean Increase=7.56
SD=7.13	SD=4.18	+61

Daily evaluation of each student was stressed by the author. The traditional marking system used in the school does not suit the goals and objectives of Personal Growth. Since the class is based on verbal communication, grades are given for participation in class discussion, listening ability, self-disclosure, frankness/confrontation, and interpersonal communication. Shy students are graded at their own levels, and differently from highly verbal students. Students are told their daily grades during the last 5 minutes of each class period so that each student knows what areas he or she needs to work on. Besides a daily grade, students are given an oral 6-week test and a tape-recorded final exam.

From the significant gains over the years on the Interpersonal Communication Inventory, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, and the students' feedback and grades, the Personal Growth course became a two-part class structured as follows:

1st Semester (September to January): Personal Growth I

All new 10th graders plus all 11th graders new to the High School

2nd Semester (January to June): Personal Growth II

All 12th graders

The East Detroit Special Education Department feels that the affective area is so important that Personal Growth I is recommended for all certified behaviorally disordered students as part of their English Communication credit at their IEP. Personal Growth II is chosen by the students as an English Communication elective because of the growth from Personal Growth I.

Personal Growth is a lifelong process and personal growth activities often produce significant behavior changes weeks, months, or even years after the class and activities have occurred.

This curriculum gave evidence of how a teacher and all teachers can become the critical stabilizing force in many students' lives through their understanding of the learning disabled students' and emotionally impaired students' social ineptitude. With the literature showing how special education and behaviorally disordered students are at a higher risk for affective development, the school can become preventive through the application of affective education, teaching directly to a hierarchy of skills. Teachers need an affective curriculum which provides them with the tools to teach affective skills in a systematic manner. The Houchens Daily Personal Growth curriculum is a step in this direction and will increase self-concept in secondary behaviorally disordered students.

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